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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the views of the Dean of Bradley University's College of Education and Health Services. It begins by profiling Bradley University and the dean herself. Next, it discusses her perspective on deaning and surviving the deanship. It then presents several of her own leadership principles which have enabled her to survive and enjoy the deanship. They include (1) create a caring learning organization and a culture of change; (2) provide a model or approach as a unifying element; (3) lead change by being a diplomat; (4) provide professional development opportunities; (5) always keep the best interest of the university at heart; (6) communicate on an ongoing basis with faculty, staff, and students; and (7) listen to your inner voice and go with your gut feelings. (SM)

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Surviving the Deanship:

It Plays in Peoria or Perspectives of a Private University Dean

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Preface

Tucker and Bryan, 1988, describe the various roles of the academic dean as the dove, the dragon, and the diplomat. The dove of peace often has to intervene between warring factions of faculty or departments to bring stability to the unit. At other times, the dean must be a dragon and drive away forces that threaten the value system, the integrity, and the financial stability of the unit. The role that is most often assumed, however, is that of diplomat to guide, inspire, and encourage the people who live and work in such an enriching, yet competitive learning environment.

I view my deanship at Bradley University primarily as that of diplomat. I have served in this role for twelve years, since March of 1977, and became the founding dean of a newly developed or merged college that was formulated from two existing smaller units. The new College is that of Education and Health Sciences, a blending of professions that have common missions. However, there were disparate factions at the time that did not want to be in the same unit. We worked through that over a couple years' period of time in retreats and developed a new mission and vision statement and began to understand that if we worked as a unit of the whole, we were much stronger than working as independent, autonomous units. Eventually, a new department was born, that of physical therapy, as well as new majors in the health areas and in the education disciplines.

Our College model (Sattler and Jensen, 1998) now is that of a comprehensive, integrated services unit or a blending of these disciplines in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical experience. Our mission is preparing leaders in the human service professions, and our vision is employing a comprehensive, integrated services approach that promotes interprofessional development.

Profile of Bradley University

Bradley University is a private, independent, comprehensive (Masters I level) university with 6,000 students, of whom approximately 1,000 are graduate students. The University is located in Peoria in central Illinois. Peoria is the third largest city in Illinois and is situated along the Illinois river. It is home to Caterpillar, Inc., a multinational corporation, along with many other diversified industries. The city is rich with human service and health care agencies. Peoria was once known for its vaudeville and theatre days and the old adage, "If it plays in Peoria, it will play anywhere", came from new plays and shows that premiered in the town.

Bradley University was founded by a woman, Lydia Moss Bradley, in 1897, and she was inducted recently into The National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York. She was an extraordinary woman and has been an inspiration to generations since the founding of the institution. The University has five academic

colleges and a graduate school and recently celebrated its centennial in 1997 and completed a capital campaign in 1998 for a total of 126 million dollars.

Profile of Dean Sattler's history with the

College of Education and Health Sciences

My entire academic career has been at Bradley University. I joined the university in 1977 as an assistant professor and rose through the professorial ranks. I served as the chairperson of the Department of Special Education, developing a new major within that department, and then served as associate dean for one month before being appointed as acting dean of two newly merged colleges. The former Dean of Education took a provost's position in another state and the former Dean of Health Sciences retired. I was scared to death, but knew the faculty well and decided to seek the Deanship, even though I was an internal candidate. I decided to roll up my sleeves and work with them to make positive changes and to develop the unit into one that would gain regional and national recognition.

The College now has 1250 students of whom 250 are graduate students. The unit has five departments, two centers and one institute, and four professional development school partnerships. There are 53 full-time faculty, many part-time faculty, an associate dean, and three professional staff members. The College is growing and just initiated two new majors, that of health sciences, an innovative, interdisciplinary major, and a master of physical therapy. The College is one of

five academic colleges and a graduate school within the university, including engineering, business, communication and fine arts, liberal arts and sciences, and education and health sciences.

I am now the senior dean in the university having served for twelve years with two different presidents and four provosts. Some privileges do come with the senior status. At present, I serve on the search committee to hire a new president.

A Perspective of Deaning and Surviving the Deanship

I believe context is very important. I have tried to build a learning community and a culture of caring. We first started with the building blocks of developing, through a consensus process, the mission, vision, and core values of the unit. Then, we set about developing objectives, action plans, and strategic plans. We developed buy-in from the administration, faculty, staff, and students. New programs, faculty, staff, facilities, and equipment were gained as a result of the community seeing that our dreams or plans really could come true. The faculty began to realize that they owned this curriculum and all aspects of these programs, and it was up to them to bring about change. These are some of the foundation building blocks.

I have tremendous admiration for the faculty and staff and they have shaped my learning and leadership style. Caring leadership (Lyman, 1999) and developing a culture of caring are central to my style.

Also, I do believe that the private university affords some autonomy to the dean that perhaps is not available at public institutions. Of course, this is easy for me to say since I have never served in an administrative role at a public institution. I believe deans at private institutions are able to respond more quickly to change, such as curricular change and new programs, without having to gain approvals from state legislators and boards of regents. At least this is what my colleague deans at state universities tell me. Also, I have enjoyed the flexibility and autonomy granted to me by the university provost and president.

Bowen, 1995, chronicles the leadership journeys and perspectives of five education deans. With that monograph in mind, I have reflected upon my leadership style and have developed several of my own leadership principles that I wish to share.

I. <u>Create a caring learning organization and a culture of change.</u>

I have attempted to lead by building a consensus around a mission and vision. Recognizing and developing others' abilities are key to giving them permission to take control of and design their own destiny. The team approach is paramount within the College. For example, the College Executive Committee has become the group that is at the heart of the college in accomplishing tasks. I believe they feel empowered and act accordingly.

2. Provide a model or approach as a unifying element.

Our College model is that of comprehensive, integrated services which fits our organization, our vision, and our larger community. In developing this model, I attempted to link the local and global context by gaining faculty appreciation for the common struggles of the professions nationally and then linking those struggles to the local situation within the departments and College.

3. Lead change by being a diplomat

I believe a dean must be a diplomat within their college, the University, and the greater professional community. This involves creating buy-in with your faculty and staff for change, new programs, and long term plans. Part of this role involves educating your provost and president to the needs of the unit and the desire for new majors and new partnerships with the regional professional community, for example.

4. Provide professional development opportunites

Developing the faculty and staff is a key component. First, hiring the right faculty to fit within the department and College model is important, and then getting out of their way and letting them create. The dean is responsible for providing access to resources and a faculty development plan. Also, clear standards and guidelines for tenure, promotion, and annual renewal are critical so

faculty will have success within the unit. Regular evaluative feedback on performance is expected.

5. Always keep the best interest of the university at heart.

The interests of the institution and the continuance of its programs take priority over the interests of individuals. At times, a dean may need to be a dragon and make those tough decisions, if necessary, to release a faculty member who is not making progress or to motivate faculty who might be neglecting a stagnating curriculum. These are never easy tasks to take on, but these decisions ultimately protect the institution and current and future students.

6. Communicate, communicate, communicate

That old adage that "information and knowledge are power" is important. Provide ways to keep in contact with your faculty, staff, and students in meaningful ways and to provide information to empower them. I am using electronic mail now on a regular basis to communicate via listserves or groupings to all College faculty and specific committees. For example, on a daily basis I refer my on-line Chronicle of Higher Education to the faculty, and they very much appreciate that. Also, I'm providing agendas and minutes of meetings now electronically, so faculty are informed promptly.

I also have my administrative assistant track faculty and staff successes, and she drafts letters of recognition to each for an article published or a paper presented

or a grant secured, for example. These letters are copied to appropriate administrators and placed in personnel files. This seems like a minor task. However, if done on a consistent basis, it has dramatic pay-off. The faculty member appreciates the recognition, and the dean becomes much more informed about faculty professional activities.

The dean's communication with his or her immediate supervisor, usually a vice president and/or provost, is critical to long-term success. Establish times to meet individually with the provost on a regular basis and go to the appointment prepared with agenda items so valuable time is not wasted. Gain an appreciation of the provost's academic interests and background and develop a plan to educate him or her about the academic disciplines within your college. Invite yourself to department faculty meetings at least once a semester for open agenda conversations. Invite the provost and president to your college meetings on an annual or semester basis, as well, for open conversation about important issues at hand.

Your external communication style with the regional professional community is also important. Choose reporters and media experts you wish to talk with and always prepare for the interviews.

7. **Listen to your inner voice.**

I have learned to listen to my inner voice and to go with my instincts or "gut-level" feelings. Whenever I have ignored that inner voice, I have ended up regretting my decision. I believe we each have this inner voice that keeps us spiritually centered and provides courage for us to do the right thing.

In summary, these basic principles have allowed me to survive and enjoy the deanship. My college faculty, students, and other constituents will have to determine whether I have done more than just survive, and if I have been successful in advancing the college and university.

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